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THE WASHINGTON POST

Friday, September 30, 1983

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# U.S. Project Interviews Emigres on Workings of

By Murrey Marder  
Washington Post Staff Writer

An exceptional five-year, \$7.5-million research project on the Soviet Union, conducted by academics with federal financing, was disclosed publicly yesterday, two years after being launched with great confidentiality to preserve its objectivity.

The study taps what many specialists regard as one of the deepest wells of information on the Soviet Union available in the West, the more than 250,000 Soviet citizens who have emigrated from the Soviet Union since 1970.

About 130,000 of them reached the United States. They are the prime source of data being systematically examined for

the first time to seek answers to these questions:

- How does the Soviet system really work?
- How do Soviet citizens work the system?
- Where is the Soviet system going?

Project spokesmen said approximately 85 percent of these Soviet emigres were statistically classed as Jewish, although many were only nominally Jewish or non-Jews in mixed marriages or children of such marriages; 10 percent are Armenian, and the remainder are of other ethnic origin.

From this pool of emigres, a scientifically selected sampling of 2,800 has been selected for interviews, to minimize bias caused by above-average education and income, skilled

employment and ethnic background. Officials said unusual precautions have been taken to limit knowledge of the interviewees' identity to non-governmental scholars.

In the early 1980s, Harvard University sponsored a successful project that drew on Soviet Armenian emigres. Harder opportunities were created by the surge of Soviet emigres that began in the late 1960s, peaked in 1979 and was severely curtailed after the U.S.-Soviet clash over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December of that year.

A U.S. attempt in 1972 to tap the emigre flow into Israel, State Department officials recalled yesterday, foundered on Israeli concern that it might dry up the refugee flow.

That prompted the present study, first

## Soviet System

championed by Carter administration Soviet specialist Marshall Shulman, and official Washington's prime proponent of federally supported research on the Soviet Union, Andrew W. Marshall of the Pentagon.

Paul K. Cook, special assistant for Soviet and East-West affairs in the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, said that, while U.S. scholars have drawn on the Soviet emigre community for specialized research projects, the project now under way is "to my knowledge the largest single social science project the U.S. government has ever financed."

He said that \$3.7 million of the estimated \$7.5 million has been allocated and that nearly two-thirds of the amount is from the

Defense Department, less than one-third from the CIA's "overt side" and "5 to 10 percent from State," mostly in services.

The project is officially funded by the National Council for Soviet and East European Research, an independent nonprofit corporation created in 1979, and final responsibility for it rests with academics, not government officials.

Research is directed by a nine-member group of scholars, headed by Prof. James R. Millar, professor of economics at the University of Illinois. The project employs 92 bilingual interviewers, mainly U.S. graduate and post-graduate students in Soviet affairs. First published results are expected in about a year.

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DCI/ICS/ 83-3236  
13 October 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR:

[redacted] VC/CIPC  
[redacted] ES/CIPC  
[redacted] HUMINT  
[redacted] SIGINT  
[redacted] COMIREX

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SUBJECT: Meeting on Soviet Civil Unrest

1. On 7 October 1983, I attended a meeting chaired by Stan Moskowitz, NIO/USSR-EE, on the magnitude of civil unrest in the Soviet Union. Attendees included representatives from FBIS, DDO, CRES, SOVA, State, Army, Air Force, and DIA. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the level of knowledge about the topic. [redacted]

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2. [redacted] NIC, discussed his preparation of the National Intelligence Memorandum, April 1983, on "Dimensions of Civil Unrest in the Soviet Union." He stated that, recognizing that the forces for continuity within the USSR are strong, he nevertheless searched for instances of demonstration, strikes, riots, and political violence since 1970, finding some 280 examples. These are not reflections of political or intellectual dissidence; rather, they are largely blue collar in nature. Less than half were caused by consumer shortages; however, when combined with those based on nationalities problems, they amount to the majority. They include industrial unrest and assassination attempts; in general, Estonia has the largest number of examples. He cited the unique contribution of FBIS reporting from Western Europe on the topic. A key point he noted was the time lag in reporting on civil disturbances; over 50% of the reports are more than a year after the incident [redacted]

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3. He stated that he encountered two views:

a. That the data exaggerates the actual level of occurrences (few multiple-source reports, emigres are unreliable, etc.).

b. That the reports are merely the tip of the iceberg. (C)

4. [redacted] of the DDI Analytic Support Group discussed his statistical approach to the problem. He noted a significant disparity among sources in reporting on different areas, and a similar disparity among sources

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in reporting on different types of incidents. In comparing classified and unclassified reporting, only 7 of 105 incidents were reported in both, leading to a high level of statistical uncertainty that most incidents are reported. An unclassified study on Soviet civil unrest currently being prepared for Andy Marshall, OSD/Net Assessment, will provide a totally independent data base and a useful tool for comparison. [REDACTED]

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Discussion Points:

- [REDACTED] believes that a variety of data bases exist, but that much of the data is untapped. [REDACTED]

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- The question of priorities was raised [REDACTED] example. (Military requirements have the highest priority; a "soft topic" may not be reported/disseminated.) [REDACTED]

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- The NIO commented that the topic will never equate to high military priorities, but that it is unique in that every USSR resident may have some knowledge of the topic.

- A DIA representative stated that they have initiated a major study on the vulnerability of the Soviet, East German, Polish, and Rumanian regimes to civil unrest. [REDACTED]

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and the priority of the topic is being emphasized [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The prototype study is on Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands (the approach is via Administrative Area, not Military Region), and will include an examination of the geographic, ethnic, social, and industrial factors involved.

- Another participant suggested modeling the approach to civil unrest on that of civil defense (again, all Soviet residents would have a potential exposure to the topic). [REDACTED]

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- The State representative questioned the applicability of the ASG's statistical "capture/recapture" methodology due to the lack of homogeneity within the USSR. Projections may not be valid from one region to another, thus requiring a regional approach such as DIA's.
- Another participant stressed the importance of identifying the customer and the need for this information. Is it for DOD wartime planning or to assess current Soviet "guns vs. butter" policy, or both? A DIA representative cited current Soviet efforts indicating increased emphasis on consumer good production.
- The SOVA representative stated that they have prepared two requirements: one on nationalities, one on dissidents.

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- The NIO then addressed analysis.

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- The NIO requested ASG to work with SOVA and DIA to determine data processing requirements to satisfy all users. They are to report to him in about two weeks.
- The NIO questioned whether or not a conference (open or classified) should be held on the topic. It was generally agreed that an appropriate time would be after the completion of a major work on the topic (apparently a book by the same individual preparing the study for Andy Marshall).

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5. The next meeting will be held in approximately three weeks, after the two reports requested are furnished to the NIO.

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